

APPROVED

Town of Wallingford, VT

Planning Commission (P.C.) Meeting & Public Hearing Minutes
February 12, 2018 7:00 pm Town Office, 75 Main St. Wallingford Village

Members Present: Erika Berner (Chair), Jill Burkett, Justin Jankus; Kevin Mullin, Daniel Alcorn

Others Present: Elysa Smigielski (Planner, Rutland Regional Planning Commission), J. Biasuzzi (Recorder),
refer to attendance list (addendum a)

Meeting was called to order by E. Berner at 7:02 p.m. and audio was electronically recorded.

The meeting's (draft) agenda was reviewed. K.Mullin made a **Motion** to accept the Agenda. J. Jankus seconded, all approved, and Motion passed.

The Minutes of 10/10/2017 and 1/8/2018 were reviewed. J. Jankus made a **Motion** to approve both Minutes; K. Mullin seconded; and Motion passed..

E. Berner then Opened the Public Hearing for the draft Town Plan. The Chair introduced the PC Members and Zoning Administrator. She swore in all in attendance that planned to testify; as noted on the attendance roster. The Public Hearing's purpose and the rules of procedure were explained.

Berner introduced two letters from residents into testimony. D. Sampson submitted an opinion against draft Watershed Management (related to River Corridors) regulation. T. Heffernan submitted information on the education component of the Town Plan. (refer to addendums b & c).

David Rosa, VT DEC Regional Floodplain Manager, described current River Corridor mapping, and provided a handout on the subject. L. Williams asked about River Corridors and proposed regulation. D. Rosa briefly described the principle of proposed by-law language. J. Jankus what the benefits to the Town would be for adopting River Corridor rules. D. Rosa replied that reducing development in higher flood risk areas reduce damage costs and lowers flood insurance rates for both private and Town property (roads & bridges). S. Switzer (noting a typo error on Page 25 of draft TP) commented that River Corridor regulation is part of the Emergency Relief Assistance Fund program, which could reduce the Town's cost obligation for damage repair to as little as 7.5%. L. Williams asked how River Corridor rules may impact agriculture. D. Rosa noted that most agricultural activities are exempt from Town regulation. E. Smigielski, a Town Plan Specialist from RRPC, noted that existing development is taken into consideration, amending the River Corridor maps (if & when) River Corridor regulation is being drafted.

R. Soule voiced concern on when the stated Purpose and Use section (page 36) conflicts with a contrary Zoning permit application. He also recommended striking "generally" from the first paragraph on the Industrial Land Use Zone (Page 16), and changing the current "light manufacturing" classification for gravel pits and quarries.

W. Scranton expressed concern that the Purpose of the TP was located at the end of the document, and the lack of a Table of Contents. This was supported by J. Jankus and several others in attendance. . E. Smigielski

agreed to develop a Table of Contents and move this and the Purpose statement to the front of the document. W. Scranton submitted a 2004 copy of the TP as a sample. E. Smigielski noted that the draft 2018 TP was a new format from the traditional data-loaded town plans of the past; adding that this format, used in Hubbardton in 2017, received accolades from the State of VT. E. Bernier agreed that recent continuing education forums encouraged town plans to be more concise and reader friendly than traditional plans.

Kathy Ross asked if the terms and phrases used in the “Word Clouds” (pages 6-9) carried any force in the TP. E. Smigielski that Act 250 and the Public Utility (30VSA, Sec.248) Commissions both reference Town Plans in their application reviews, and that words and phrases in the TP usually carry weight in identifying the Town’s priority on a specific issue. K. Ross encouraged the use of “QUIET” throughout the TP.

J. Barbierri asked the PC to review the TP at this Hearing, page by page. Starting with page 4, the TP should be corrected to state there are 804 permanent residences, vs. “people”. E. Bernier asked the Public to submit their lists of typo errors and amendments. She noted that the final document that would be forwarded by the PC to the Select Board could not be changed; and that this was the time in which to address these issues.

J. Barbierri asked where the action item to “locate a permanent home for the Historical Museum in 2021” came from. She noted the Historical Society had donated \$40,000 to the Town for air conditioning as part of an agreement to use the upper floor of the Town Office building. She also noted that the floor was shared with the Masonic and Alumni organizations. K. Mullin explained that the intent of the proposal was to try to locate a better location for the displays, and make the upper floor more available for other venues.

D. Scranton, Conservation Commission member, noted that Stone Meadow was not mentioned in the TP. E. Smigielski acknowledged receipt of this and the information sent to her. She also emphasized that the Action Items were not “Must Do” objective; the intent is not to “micro-manage” the Town. They are intended to identify a set of desired objectives to try to achieve as opportunity and funding becomes available. K. Mullen stated his support of the Action Items & time line, as a means of scheduling personal time for specific issues.

J. Barbierri asked when the new information submitted would be reviewed and the TP edited. She also asked that past conditions on the Green Mountain National Forest be added; requiring Town approval and compensation for private lands acquired by the GMNF and taken off the tax rolls.

E. Smigielski noted that the Select Board (SB) meeting that was proposed to include a Public Hearing was (30 days from 2/12) March 19th. E. Bernier suggested scheduling a special working meeting in the interim period to prepare a revised version in time for the SB meeting on 3/19. E. Smigielski proposed using a special resolution to stay on the proposed schedule. W. Brooks, Select Board Chairman, recommended that the PC continue the Public Hearing, take the time necessary to amend the TP, and schedule the SB Hearing once the PC Hearing process was complete.

W. Scranton noted that the Gate Way Regions were mentioned in past plans, and not in the draft TP.

C. Gotlieb asked where the information for the Town Meeting questionnaires went. E. Smigielski replied that the summary was tabulated through “Survey Monkey” software. The Town Forum results helped identify Action Items.

C. Gotlieb asked about the direction of solar development in the Town. The draft TP does not conform to requirements for enhanced energy planning, so “Substantial Deference” will not be given the Town by the Public Utility Commission in application Hearings. While the Town can participate as an Interested Party in application reviews, restricting solar development is not going to significantly change from current status.

L. Williams asked where the Vision Statement (page 36) came from. E. Smigielski explained that the Vision Statement was related to co-operative goals with other towns in the region; and so the language will appear similar to that in other Town plans. She suggested renaming the Vision Statement. A resident suggested locating the Vision Statement at the front of the document.

L. Edmunds stated his opinion of investing in an Economic Opportunity Consultant as a waste of time and money. E. Bernier referenced a recent Zoning workshop, that suggested a Consultant is a means of identifying what businesses would do well in a specific community. However, the recent agreement by the SB to work with the VT Council on Rural Development may achieve this objective with little cost to the Town or need for grant funding.

S. Switzer summarized a list of list of typo or factual errors on pages 20, 24, 25, 26, and 32.

D. Scranton asked why the Zoning Map was used as the Future Land Use Map. E. Smigielski encouraged the PC to decide on the Overlay Districts (example river corridors, wetlands, preferred solar/wind sites, Industrial Zones, etc.) should be added to the final Future Land Use Map.

C. Russ asked when the next draft TP would be available. He was also concerned about the comments regarding the Action Items. E. Smigielski replied that Action Items were not arbitrary. She asked the PC to review and remove any Items it decides are contrary the Town’s objectives.

She also explained that the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) was not the business to initiate or assist in implementing all Action Items. The RRPC was a planning organization. As an example, she cited developing the Town Plan and Zoning Ordinance. However, a Village Enhancement project, or developing a public transportation program would have to accomplished though other organizations.

L. Williams asked how to involve more of the Town’s population. Several residents expressed their appreciation to the Planning Commission for their efforts.

Following discussion, the PC elected to continue the Public Hearing to their next regular meeting date. A special working meeting would be scheduled to allow the PC to review the suggestions and recommendations received and amend the draft TP. E. Bernier asked for a Motion to continue the Public Hearing to 7:00 pm, on Monday March 12, 2018, to convene at Town Office. J. Jankus so Moved; K. Mullin seconded, all approved.

E, Berner asked for any other business or final comments. Hearing none, J. Burkett made a Motion to close the evening's Meeting; K. Mullin seconded, all approved and the Meeting adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Submitted by:

J. M. Biasuzzi

Approved: 6/14/2018